

Application No.: 09/785,693
Response to OA dated: April 29, 2004
Amendment dated: September 29, 2004

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4-12, and 14-20; cancel claims 3 and 13; and add new claims 21-31, all as shown below. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute any originally presented or canceled claims in a continuing or future application.

1. (Currently Amended) A conversation manager for managing the flow of messages in a collaboration system, comprising:

a conversation initiation ~~mechanism for initiating~~ logic that initiates a conversation among participants, wherein said conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to an extensible protocol, wherein said extensible protocol provides the ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by participants for said conversation;

a participation registration ~~mechanism for registering~~ logic that registers said participants in [[a]] said conversation; and,

a conversation repository ~~for storing~~ that stores conversation management data, wherein said conversation management data is used to manage said conversation among said participants.

2. (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein the conversation manager controls the flow of said conversation between the participants.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein the conversation manager controls a publish/subscribe service for accepting said messages and sending said messages to and from said participants.

5. (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 4 wherein a registered participant ~~may send~~ sends said messages to the publish/subscribe service for distribution to one or more said participants.

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6. (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein [[a]] said conversation is initiated by an initiator participant authorized to initiate conversation[[s]].

7. (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 5 wherein the conversation repository includes instructions for the distribution of said messages sent via the publish/subscribe service to the participants.

8. (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein [[a]] said conversation ~~may be~~ is terminated by a terminator participant authorized to terminate said conversations conversation among all said participants.

9. (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein [[a]] said conversation ~~may be~~ is aborted by the conversation manager at any time by sending abort messages to said participants.

10. (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim [[8]] 9 wherein a participant in the [[an]] aborted conversation ~~may be~~ is compensated for automatically by a substitute participant.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for managing conversations in a collaboration system, comprising the steps of:

initiating a conversation among participants, wherein said conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to an extensible protocol, wherein said extensible protocol provides the ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by participants for said conversation;

registering said participants in [[a]] said conversation; and,

storing conversation management data in a conversation repository, wherein said conversation management data is used to manage said conversation among said participants.

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12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 including controlling the flow of said conversation between the participants.
13. (Canceled)
14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 including controlling a publish/subscribe service for accepting said messages and sending said messages to and from participants.
15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 including sending [[a]] ~~said~~ message messages from a registered participant to the publish/subscribe service for distribution to one or more participants.
16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 including initiating [[a]] ~~said~~ conversation by an initiator participant authorized to initiate said conversation[[s]].
17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 including storing in the conversation repository instructions for the distribution of said messages sent via the publish/subscribe service to the participants.
18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 including terminating [[a]] ~~said~~ conversation by a terminator participant authorized to terminate said ~~conversations~~ conversation among all said participants.
19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 including aborting [[a]] ~~said~~ conversation ~~may be~~ is aborted by the conversation manager at any time by sending abort messages to said participants.
20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[18]] 19 including compensating automatically for [[an]] ~~the~~ aborted conversation participant by using a substitute participant.

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21. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said business protocols include cXML, BizTalk, RosettaNet and proprietary business documents.
22. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said participants define routing and filtering for said messages.
23. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 further comprising a module to apply content transformation for said messages.
24. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said participants handle the implementation of their own business process and rules locally while confirming to the rules defined by said information and said business protocols.
25. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation is associated to a conversation space, wherein said conversation space is an abstract structure wherein messages of said conversation are transmitted among participants according to said protocol, wherein said conversation space and with one of said business protocols are identified by an URL.
26. (New) The conversation manager of claim 25 wherein said participants access said conversation space using a particular business protocol.
27. (New) The conversation manager of claim 25 wherein said conversation space supports multiple business protocols by using multiple URLs.
28. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation repository comprises information related to said business protocols, said conversation identifiers, identifiers for said participants, identifiers for said messages and said messages.

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29. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said protocol is extensible by said participants.

30. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said protocol further allows quality of service parameters for each message.

31. (New) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation initiation mechanism initiates a plurality of concurrent conversations among participants.